



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Patterson sends Pearl Harbor survivors back for anniversary memorial

Two Texas State Veterans Homes residents served on same ship Dec. 7, 1941

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AUSTIN — Two Texans who fought back the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 69 years ago will soon be headed back for special memorial services, thanks to the Texas State Veterans Home in Temple where the old heroes live.

Once shipmates aboard the USS Phoenix, Albert Kamenicky and Ben Russell each watched in horror as the USS Arizona sank in flames that fateful day, Dec. 7, 1941.

Kamenicky and Russell served with honor aboard the USS Phoenix for the duration of World War II. Now, the two are residents at the William R. Courtney Texas State Veterans Home in Temple. Both are members of an elite - and dwindling - fraternity.

At 2:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3, residents and staff members at the Texas State Veterans Home will host a Send Off Luau for Kamenicky and Russell. The news media is invited to attend and interview both men. Texas Home Health Hospice is sponsoring the party.

At 8 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, Kamenicky and Russell will depart for their trip back to Pearl Harbor, escorted by the Patriot Guard Riders and the American Legion Riders motorcycle clubs. Both men will be available to the news media at 7:30 a.m. at the veterans home before they leave.

Jerry Patterson, Chairman of the Veterans Land Board, said being able to fly the former shipmates to Hawaii for the rededication ceremonies of the USS Arizona Visitor Center is a privilege. "The ceremonies are in honor of these gentlemen and the others who fought that day," Patterson said. "Honoring them for their service is the right thing to do."

There are Texas State Veterans Homes in Temple, Floresville, Big Spring, Bonham, McAllen, El Paso and Amarillo. Another is under construction in Tyler. Each home provides skilled, long-term nursing care, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, a library, and a certified, secured Alzheimer's unit with its own secured outdoor courtyard. For more information on Texas State Veterans Homes and other veterans programs, call 1-800-252-VETS (1-800-252-8387), or visit the VLB at www.texasveterans.com.

WHO: Pearl Harbor survivors Albert Kamenicky and Ben Russell
WHAT: Both men, who live at the Texas State Veterans Home in Temple, are
headed to Pearl Harbor
WHEN: 2:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3 - Send Off Luau; 8 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 4 depart
from the home
WHERE: William R. Courtney Texas State Veterans Home, 1901 S. First St.,
Temple (north end of VA
campus)

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